Dark Hollow

By Anna Katharine Green

Illustrations by C. D. Rhodes

SYNOPSIS.

A curious crowd of neighbors invade the mysterious home of Judge Ostrander, county judge and eccentric recluse, following a veiled woman who proves to be the widow of a man tried before the judge and electrocuted for murder years before. Her daughter is engaged to the judge's son, from whom he is estranged, but the murder is between the lovers. She plans to clear her husband's memory and asks the judge's aid. Deborah Scoville reads the newspaper clippings telling the story of the murder of Algernon Etheridge by John Scoville in Dark Hollow, twelve years before. The judge and Mrs. Scoville meet at Spencer's Folly and she shows him how, on the day of the murder, she saw the shadow of a man, whittling a stick and wearing a long peaked cap. The judge engages her and her daughter Reuther to live with him in his mysterious home. Deborah and her lawyer, Black, go to the police station and see the stick used to murder Etheridge. She discovers a broken knife-blade point embedded in it. Deborah and Reuther go to live with the judge. Deborah sees a portrait of Oliver, the judge's son, with a black band painted across the eyes. That night she finds, in Oliver's room, a cap with a peak like the shadowed one, and a knife with a broken blade-point. Anonymous letters and a talk with Miss Weeks increase her suspicions and fears. She finds that Oliver was in the ravine on the murder night. Black warns her and shows her other anonymous letters hinting at Oliver's guilt.

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

"Madam, we have said our say on this subject. If you have come to see the matter as I see it, I can but congratulate you upon your good sense, and express the hope that it will continue to prevail. Reuther is worthy of the best—" he stopped abruptly. "Reuther is a girl after my own heart," he gently supplemented, with a glance toward his papers lying in a bundle at his elbow, "and she shall not suffer because of this disappointment to her girlish hopes. Tell her so with my love."

It was a plain dismissal. Mrs. Scoville took it as such, and quietly left the room. As she did so she was approached by Reuther, who handed her a letter which had just been delivered. It was from Mr. Black, and read thus:

We have found the rogue and have succeeded in inducing him to leave town. He's a man in the bill-sticking business and he owns to a grievance against the person we know.

Deborah's sleep that night was without dreams.

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About this time the restless pacing of the judge in his study at nights became more frequent and lasted longer. In vain Reuther played her most cheerful airs and sang her sweetest songs, the monotonous tramp kept up with a regularity nothing could break.

"He's worried by the big case now being tried before him," Deborah would say, when Reuther's eyes grew wide and misty in her sympathetic trouble. And there was no improbability in the plea, for it was a case of much moment, and of great local interest. A man was on trial for his life and the circumstances of the case were such that the feeling called forth was unusually bitter; so much so, indeed, that every word uttered by the counsel and every decision made by the judge were discussed from one end of the county to the other, and in Shelby, if nowhere else, took precedence of all other topics, though it was a presidential year and party sympathies ran high.

The more thoughtful spirits were inclined to believe in the innocence of the prisoner; but the lower elements of the town, moved by class prejudice, were bitterly antagonistic to his cause and loud for his conviction.

The time of Judge Ostrander's office was nearly up, and his future continuance on the bench might very easily depend upon his attitude at the present hearing. Yet he, without apparent recognition of this fact, showed without any hesitancy or possibly without self-consciousness, the sympathy he felt for the man at the bar, and ruled accordingly almost without variation.

A week passed, and the community was all agog, in anticipation of the judge's charge in the case just mentioned. It was to be given at noon, and Mrs. Scoville, conscious that he had not slept an hour the night before (having crept down more than once to listen if his step had ceased), approached him as he prepared to leave for the courtroom and anxiously asked if he were quite well.

"Oh, yes, I'm well," he responded sharply, looking about for Reuther.

The young girl was standing a little behind him, with his gloves in her hand—a custom she had fallen into in her desire to have his last look and fond good morning.

"Come here, child," said he, in a way to make her heart beat; and, as he took the gloves from her hand, he stooped and kissed her on the forehead—something he had never done before. "Let me see you smile," said he. "It's a memory I like to take with me into the courtroom."

But when in her pure delight at his caress and the fatherly feeling which gave a tremor to his simple request, she lifted her face with that angelic look of hers which was far sweeter and far more moving than any smile, he turned away abruptly, as though he had been more hurt than comforted, and strode out of the house without another word.

Morning passed and the noon came, bringing Deborah an increased uneasiness. When lunch was over and Reuther sat down to her piano, the feeling had grown into an obsession, which had soon resolved itself into a definite fear. She found herself so restless that she decided upon going out. Donning her quietest gown and veil, she slipped out of the front door, hardly knowing whither her feet would carry her.

They did not carry her far—not at this moment, at least. On the walk outside she met Miss Weeks hurrying toward her from the corner, stumbling in her excitement. At sight of Deborah's figure she paused and threw up her hands.

"Oh, Mrs. Scoville, such a dreadful thing!" she cried. "Look here!" And, opening one of her hands, she showed a few torn scraps of paper whose familiarity made Deborah's blood run cold.

"On the bridge," gasped the little lady, leaning against the fence for support. "Pasted on the railing of the bridge. I should never have seen it, nor looked at it, if it hadn't been that I—"

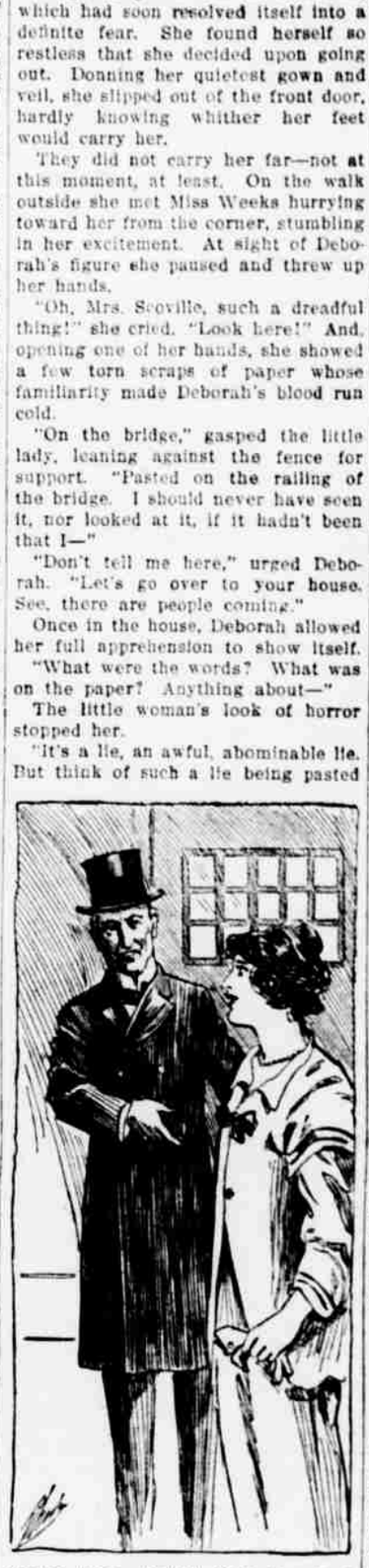
"Don't tell me here," urged Deborah. "Let's go over to your house. See, there are people coming."

Once in the house, Deborah allowed her full apprehension to show itself.

"What were the words? What was on the paper? Anything about—"

The little woman's look of horror stopped her.

"It's a lie, an awful, abominable lie. But think of such a lie being pasted



"Come Here, Child," Said He, in a Way to Make Her Heart Beat.

up on that dreadful bridge for anyone to see. After twelve years, Mrs. Scoville! After—"

"Miss Weeks—" Ah, the oil of that golden speech on troubled waters! What was its charm? "Let me see those lines or what there is left of them so that I may share your feelings. They must be dreadful—"

"They are more than dreadful. They are for the kitchen fire. Wait a moment and then we will talk."

But Deborah had no mind to let these pieces escape her eye. Nor did she fail. At the end of fifteen minutes she had the torn bits of paper arranged in their proper position and was reading these words:

The scene of Olive der's crime.

"The beginning of the end!" was Deborah's thought. "If, after Mr. Black's efforts, a charge like this is found posted up in the public ways, the ruin of the Ostranders is determined upon, and nothing we can do can stop it."

In five minutes more she had said good-by to Miss Weeks and was on her way to the courthouse. As she approached it she was still further alarmed by finding this square full of people, standing in groups or walking impatiently up and down with their eyes fixed on the courthouse doors. Within, there was the uneasy hum, the anxious look, the subdued movement which marks an universal suspense. Announcement had been made that the jury had reached their verdict, and counsel were resuming their places and the judge his seat.

Those who had eyes only for the latter—and these were many—noticed a change in him. He looked older by years than when he delivered his charge. Not the prisoner himself gave greater evidence of the effect which this hour of waiting had had upon a heart whose covered griefs were, consciously or unconsciously, revealing themselves to the public eye. He did not wish this man sentenced. This was shown by his charge—the most one-sided one he had given in all his career.

Silence, that awful precursor of doom, lay in all its weight upon every ear and heart, as the clerk, advancing with the cry, "Order in the court," put his momentous question:

"Gentlemen of the jury, are you ready with your verdict?"

A hush!—then, the clear voice of the foreman:

"We are."

"How do you find? Guilty or not guilty?"

Another hesitation. Did the foreman feel the threat lurking in the air about him? If so, he failed to show it in his tones as he uttered the words which released the prisoner:

"Not guilty."

A growl from the crowd, almost like that of a beast stirring in its lair, then a quick cessation of all hubbub as every one turned to the judge to whose one-sided charge they attributed this release.

Deborah experienced in her quiet corner no alleviation of the fear which had brought her into this forbidding spot and held her breathless through these formalities.

For the end was not yet. Through all the turmoil of noisy departure and the drifting out into the square of a vast, dissatisfied throng, she had caught the flash of a bit of paper (how introduced into this moving mass of people no one ever knew) passing from hand to hand, toward the solitary figure of the judge, its delay as it reached the open space between the last row of seats and the judge's bench and its final delivery by some officious hand, who thrust it upon his notice just as he was rising to leave.

Deborah saw his finger tear its way through the envelope and his eyes fall frowningly on the paper he drew out.

Then the people's counsel and the counsel for the defense and such clerks and hangers-on as still lingered in the upper room experienced a decided sensation.

The judge, who a moment before had towered above them all in melancholy but impressive dignity, shrunk with one gasp into feebleness and sank back stricken, if not unconscious, into his chair.

It happened suddenly and showed her the same figure she had seen once before—a man with faculties suspended, but not impaired, facing them all with open gaze but absolutely dead for the moment to his own condition and to the world about.

But, horrible as this was, what she saw going on behind him was infinitely worse. A man had caught up the bit of paper Judge Ostrander had let fall from his hand and was opening his lips to read it to the curious people surrounding him.

She tried to stop him. She forced a cry to her lips which should have rung through the room, but which died away on the air unheard. The terror which had paralyzed her limbs had choked her voice.

But her ears remained true. Low as he spoke, no trumpet-call could have made its meaning clearer to Deborah Scoville than did these words:

We know why you favor criminals. Twelve years is a long time, but not long enough to make wise men forget.

CHAPTER XII.

"The Misfortunes of My House."

Schooled as most of them were to face with minds secure and tempers quite unruffled the countless surprises of a courtroom, the persons within hearing paled at the insinuation conveyed in these two sentences, and with scarcely the interchange of a glance or word, drew aside in a silence which no man seemed inclined to break.

As for the people still huddled in the doorway, they rushed away helter-skelter into the street, there to proclaim the judge's condition and its probable cause—an event which to many quite eclipsed in interest the more ordinary one which had just released to freedom a man seemingly doomed.

Few persons were now left in the great room, and Deborah, embarrassed to find that she was the only woman present, was on the point of escaping from her corner when she perceived a movement take place in the rigid form from which she had not yet withdrawn her eyes, and, regarding Judge Ostrander more attentively, she caught the gleam of his suspicious eyes as he glanced this way and that to see if his lapse of consciousness had been noticed by those about him.

Wherever the judge looked he saw abstracted faces and busy hands, and, taking heart at not finding himself watched, he started to rise. Then memory came—blasting, overwhelming memory of the letter he had been reading; and, rousing with a start, he looked down at his hand, then at the floor before him, and, seeing the letter lying there, picked it up with a secret, sidelong glance to right and left, which sank deep into the heart of the still watchful Deborah.

If those about him saw, they made no motion. Not an eye looked round and not a head turned as he straightened himself and proceeded to leave the room. Only Deborah noted how his steps faltered and how little he was to be trusted to find his way unguided to the door. It lay to the right and he was going left. Now he stumbles—isn't there any one to—yes, she is not the sole one on watch. The same man who had read aloud the note and then dropped it within reach, had stepped after him, and kindly, if artfully, turned him towards the proper place of exit. As the two disappear, Deborah wakes from her trance, and, finding herself alone among the seats, hurries to quit her corner and leave the building.

The glare—the noise of the square, as she dashes down into it seems for the moment unendurable. The pushing, panting mass of men and women of which she has now become a part closes about her, and for the moment she can see nothing but faces—faces with working mouths and blazing eyes. Thick as the crowd was in front, it was even thicker here, and far more tumultuous. Word had gone about that the father of Oliver Ostrander had been given his lesson at last, and the curiosity of the populace had risen to fever-heat in their anxiety to see how the proud Ostrander would bear himself in his precipitate downfall. They had crowded there to see and they would see.

He was evidently not prepared to see his path quite so heavily marked out for him by the gaping throng; but after one look, he assumed some show of his old commanding presence and

He Assumed Some Show of His Old Commanding Presence.

advanced bravely down the steps, awing some and silencing all, until he had reached his carriage step and the protection of the officers on guard.

Then a hoot rose from some far-off quarter of the square, and he turned short about and the people saw his face. Despair had seized it, and if any one there desired vengeance, he had it. The knell of active life had been rung for this man. He would never remount the courthouse steps, or face again a respectful jury.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FOUGHT TO DEATH OVER PIG

Possession of Porker the Cause of Sharp Skirmish Between Germans and French.

Even pigs figure sometimes in the news from the front and, as might be expected, in somewhat of a comical light. But, says a Paris dispatch, they have caused a tragedy also. One pig was the cause of a battle in which 36 Germans were killed and another was made to pose as a corpse to save him from the enemy.

In Ban-de-Sapt, north of Saint Die, both French and Germans from their trenches spied out a fine fat porker in a pen, just between the two lines. Both formed parties to go out and capture the porcine delicacy, but the French reached there first. They fastened a rope about the animal's hind legs and dragged him back to their trenches with the Germans close behind.

So heated did the controversy over the pig become that it finally developed into a night battle in which the Germans were beaten, losing, besides the 30 dead, a number of wounded.

The other pig had just been killed by a farmer in Flanders when it was reported that the Germans, always eager for such titbits as fresh pork, were near at hand. Determined to save his property, the quick-witted Belgian took the carcass to his room, tucked it in his bed, placed candles over the sheeted form and was praying fervently when a German soldier entered the room. The soldier tiptoed out when he discovered that he had come upon a chamber of death.

Differentiating Dirigibles.

The London crowd which gapes cheerfully at the army airship maneuvering over the city always asks itself whether it is looking at a friendly vessel or a Zeppelin. It is apparently ignorant of the difference of design, and so free from "nerves" that the doubt does not disturb it. Probably if a Zeppelin really did come the average Londoner would crowd up for a good place to see the bomb dropping. The instinct for a front seat seems to be stronger than that of self-preservation. The Schutte-Lanz airship is not unlike an ordinary nonrigid airship in the shape of the balloon. It is not cylindrical, but whale shaped, like a submarine. But in construction it is like a Zeppelin, with a rigid aluminum framework. It is evidently considered a successful type, for Germany has been building as many of the Schutte-Lanz type as of the Zeppelin. The name is a compound of the names of designer and builder. The inventor was Schutte, and Lanz is the name of the firm that constructs them.

Unkind Comment.

Recently while going through a cemetery in a California town the visitor came upon this on a tombstone: "I would not live alway." Beneath the inscription some irreverent person had pencilled, "Sour Grapes."

Distinctive Styles in Topcoats

What with topcoats variously named and classified with sports coats, motor coats, tourist coats, and simply overall coats, it takes a fine discrimination to pick out just the coat best suited to one's style and needs.

Sports and motor coats may be considered as one and the same thing. Those chosen for motor wear are likely to be a bit less vivid in color than the sports coats. Tan or blue or green are liked for them, while rose, canary, mustard color, hunter's green, French blue, beige and combinations including strong color contrasts mark the snappy style of coats for other sports.

As to the lines of the newest models, they are flaring, with narrow shoulders and high convertible collars. For motoring and sports pockets are ample and much in evidence, belts conspicuous by their absence.

Of coats for the tourist there is a wide variety in styles, some of them cut along the same general lines as those just described, but often pocketless. Others bear no resemblance to sports coats. Many of these topcoats are made of covert cloth, and very smart models are shown in tussor silk, prettily lined with flowered silk. They shed dust and are as practical as they are attractive.

A conservative and smart-looking coat of covert cloth is shown in the illustration. It is waterproof and in a greenish tan color. The collar and cuffs are inlaid with checkerboard silk in black and white. If one is looking for a coat to be called upon for much service and to fit all the occasions likely to come up in the course of a journey this is a model worth considering.

Half Boots.

The queerest looking pair of boots seen in a long time are those which look exactly as if someone had taken a pair of scissors and cut away the uppers just a little above the ankle line. The half boots have a seam up the front and are laced at the side, three eyelets being sufficient for the height of the shoe. Black and biscuit-colored boots are most prominent on that score.

Organdie Bodice.

Taffeta will be worn even by those who are adopting the newest fashions, and over them an organdie Moyen age bodice ending above the knee, or rather between the normal waist line and knee.

To Lend Beauty to Summer Fetes

Hats that are frivolous, along with hats that are dignified and picturesque, make place for themselves among hats that are merely sensible for wear on the rounds of midsummer days and nights. But all must be chic and bespeak the part they are to play, leaving no room in the mind for doubt on that score.

Here are two that belong to the dignified and picturesque coterie, shown with examples of flowers that are liked on millinery of this kind. They bring to mind weddings and garden fetes and all sorts of charming, gay occasions to which they will lend their own beauty. Millinery holds the center of the stage where those who aspire to elegance in dress assemble and make a part of the occasion.

The wearer of either of these hats will be entitled to feel complacent as to her headwear no matter how much elegance may vie with her own. Honors may be divided, but she will not be outshone. The large light hat is of flesh-pink georgette crepe and malines with daisies and wheat in a wreath about the crown. The wheat is of white chiffon and silk fibers, and the daisies have petals of satin in white and in light blue and pink.

This hat has a double brim, the wider, lower brim of malines bound with crepe, and the overbrim of crepe. A narrow black velvet ribbon encircles the crown and is tied in a little bow at the back. The ends are brought over the brim and fastened on the under brim, hanging from there in long ends that are never tied.

The lovely black hat of malines and lace braid is made on similar lines except that its brim is curving. The lace braid overlay on the malines brim has the effect of a double brim. The wreath of white satin oats is brightened by a single rose that deepens to pink at its center and is mounted on the crown at the left side.

Narrow black ribbon finishes a bandeau at the left and falls in long ends at the back.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

Scenting Linen.

A formula for a scent to place among her bed linen is usually liked by the dainty woman, and here is a most excellent one: One ounce powdered gum benzoin, one of powdered cloves and two of powdered cinnamon; add to these seven ounces powdered cedar wood and the same of dried lavender flowers; mix, sift and put into flat bags to lay between sheets and smaller ones for the slips; or, if pads are made to fit the shelves it will answer as well. Balsam, the fir tree balsam, gives of its own fragrance from pads made and filled with it and these, with the old-fashioned lavender, can never be improved upon for perfuming bed linen.

POOR Quo